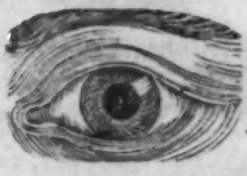
THE  EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——*VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,*
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

Vol. I.] *THURSDAY, APRIL* 21, 1808. [No. 16.

"*Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgæ; propterea quod a cultu atque humanitate Provence longissime absunt; minimeque ad eos mercatores saepe commeant, atque ea quæ ad effeminandos animos pertinent important*" CÆSAR.

Of all these, the Beauvoisois are the bravest, for as much as they resemble not in the least the manners and breeding of the people of Provence; and merchants very rarely resort thither for the purpose of importing such things as have a tendency to render men more effeminate.

AGRICULTURE, commerce and manufactures, are admitted to be the grand sources from which any nation can derive its wealth: A people under certain circumstances, may be happy enjoying only one of these sources, and that constitutes permanent riches; but when all three united smile on any country, be their happiness what it may, wealth soon becomes superabundant.

A question has arisen, and at this moment demands a solution: How far national happiness and prosperity can be promoted by foreign commerce? When we attentively consider the bountiful provision given by Providence to all nations, it seems as if the necessity of foreign commerce had been precluded by the order of DEITY. Every plant had chosen for it its proper soil, and hence draws its vital nourishment; every beast his proper provender, and every bird its seeds and insects; whilst man, under the most barren clime, had prepared for him the means of subsistence; but with the necessaries of life he was not contented, he sighed for its luxuries, in search of which he roamed to foreign parts, toiled incessantly, and ventured his life to acquire things which could not augment his happiness, nay, oftimes brought from far distant climes, through a thousand dangers, things which industry could have procured for him at home.

From this source of wealth, perhaps it would not be asserting too much to say, that three fourths of all the woes which have clouded the world with misery, for at least the last five hundred years, have taken their rise. O Commerce! Commerce! with what oceans of blood hast thou been supported! what land hast thou not drenched with human gore! what country is there in which thou hast not raged with depopulating fury! what sea that has not seen thee spreading carnage! —It is true, thou hast built cities, on the ruin of nations; thou hast erected *churches*, with the price of blood; thou hast endowed hospitals, for the reception of those whom thy rapacious covetousness maimed. Witness ye plains of Indostan; ye Peruvian mines; rise up ye inhabitants of Guinea, speak from all your sun burned shores; America assert thy claim; Europe stand not silent; say, whence flow these rivers of blood? who slew all these carcasses that so horribly disfigure the fair surface of nature? what wretch was it that robbed yonder weeping orphans of their father? that disconsolate widow of her husband? and tore the much loved youth from the arms of that fair female who now in frantic sorrow presses to her heart his lifeless corpse? Thou, Commerce, wert the assassin! thy rapacity unsheathed the dagger and snatched that afflicted man from the enjoyment of happiness, liberty and independence, and degraded him to the condition of a whip-galled slave.

In the motto prefixed to this number, we see at that early age what was CÆSAR's opinion of commerce, he declares that it has a tendency to effeminate the mind of man; the term he there uses was generally understood in a bad sense, and perhaps might be better translated, by *debauch*; and assuredly, nothing has ever had a greater tendency to debauch men's minds than commerce. Gain is the sole object—for this, both religion and morality are set at defiance; in proof hereof, let me, without comment, mention the slave-trade only, and there rest the assertion. At this moment, do we not, in a great measure, owe the present difficulties under which we labour to *foreign commerce?* Merchants run every risque to accomplish their primary object—*to get gain*; for this, laws are set at defiance, right dissolved into a vapour, and oaths esteemed as rotten straw; they engage in an illicit trade, furnish themselves with illegal papers and forged documents, carry contraband goods, and if taken by the nation aggrieved, lodge a complaint before their government; thus the nation is eventually

engaged in war, and thousands fall in the contest to sanction the iniquitous acts of their country's worst enemies: Let none misunderstand me, I speak not thus of *all* merchants: No, we are happy to assert that we have many true Americans, merchants, who are not the sordid slaves of gain, but fair, honourable dealers, who are an honour to their country, cultivaters of morality, lovers of religion, the poor man's stay, the orphans' parents, and as distinguished for their patriotism as their virtue—but of the speculating merchants who abound in every seaport in the union, who are inciters of trouble, enemies of our freedom, and foes to our independence.

We stand in need of the necessaries of life only, and with these, our country is superabundantly furnished. Commerce brings to us all the luxuries with which the earth abounds, and are we thereby improved either in virtue or health? In my opinion, the contrary is the consequence; but, say its supporters, we are thereby enriched; well, be it so, but answer me, are not riches dearly purchased with ill health and virtue's superstructure in ruins? We are a people as far removed from the European world in distance, as we are removed from their wants and necessities. Numbers of them, from the mode of living to which they have been long accustomed, cannot rest satisfied with their own productions, but must pamper their appetites with foreign dainties. We, on the other hand, within our own boundaries, can produce almost all the luxuries with which the earth abounds. Our country nearly embraces every variety of climate, and our domestic commerce, in this respect, may embrace a very extensive range. Industry has only to exert her power—ingenuity all its art. Our extensive territory abounds with resources: Let us early turn our attention to *internal concerns*, and we will in a short time little regard *foreign relations*. For my own part, should I live a hundred years, I would rather never see, during that period, a vessel for foreign intercourse float on our waters, than behold *one hundred of our citizens slain by the sword of an enemy*. If we must only by war preserve *commerce, perish commerce*. I prefer life to wealth purchased by my brother's *blood*.

OBADIAH OPTIC.

AMBITION is as restless as fire, which still consumes whatever comes in its way, without determining where to stop.

ORIGINAL.

THE SPECTACLES.—No. XII.

Accurrit quidam, notus mihi nomine tantum;
Arreptaque manu, quid agis dulcissime rerum? HOR. *sat.* 9. *lib.* I.

HORACE in this satire, severely ridicules those who being mere nominal acquaintances, presume upon the liberties warrantable only in intimate friends; and he seizes the opportunity of railing against certain pratlers who babble upon every trifle, and make themselves the chief object of encomium. He represents himself as walking along the *Via Sacra*, when a person known to him only by name, came familiarly and took his hand, saying, "How do you do my sweet fellow?" HORACE at first answered him civilly, "Pretty well, and I wish you every thing you desire;" when he kept following and prating about any and every thing; HORACE asked him his business; I am a learned man, said he, you certainly know me. The anxiety of the poet to get rid of him is well expressed by the following lines—

——————— Misere discedere quærens,
Ire modo ocius, interdum consistere, in aurem
Dicere nescio quid puero. Cum sudor ad imos
Manaret talos.*

And when this insolent fellow was told by HORACE that he was going to visit a person unknown to him, he provokingly replies, I have nothing to do and am not lazy, I will attend you thither.

There are many such persons as the poet describes, to be met with. They consider themselves of such consequence, that their company cannot be disagreeable, and want either the sense or inclination to perceive the embarrassment under which he labours, who unfortunately is the object of their attention. My friend R. is one of these characters, he is a tolerably good natured fellow, but such an insufferable babbler that he is never contented but when he is praising his own good qualities, or exaggerating the demerits of another. If

* Wanting sadly to get rid of him, I walked sometimes fast, then stopped and whispered I know not what, in the ear of my boy, while the sweat poured from all parts of my body.

R. happens to be in the same room with a stranger, the next time they meet, he accosts him with all the familiarity imaginable, and runs over a thousand occurrences which transpired a year before his acquaintance. R. relates all his own affairs with a strict minuteness, and will detain you an hour or two in dwelling upon trifles in which he was engaged: He details all the difficulties into which he was ever involved, and attributes to himself great praise for his extrication. R. is fond of talking politics; he will tell you in a moment why such a candidate cannot succeed, and explains with wonderful facility on what point the election of such an one turned. Does any news arise, R. is the first to spread it abroad, and predicts with great consequence the effect upon the country. The Grecian and Roman governments are always before him, and though he has never read a word in history, he cites it with great assurance. R. is opposed to a war with France, and asserts that BONAPARTE'S threat should not be noticed by us, for we ought to consider it as the ravings of a man intoxicated with his greatness! And that England is at war with the rights of commerce, therefore, without hesitation we ought to declare war, buy FULTON'S torpédos, destroy the British navy, and send our gun-boats up the Thames to burn London. R. proves that by certain manœvres France would have been defeated in all her battles, and hints that by pursuing *his* advice, America might yet be mistress of the world. R. is equally skilled in local politics; federalists, democrats, quids and quadroons are continually subject to his learned disquisitions; he knows the exact distinctions between the principles of each, and foretels the rise or fall of a party with the same precision as a philosopher would calculate an eclipse. In short, R. by his pretensions to universal knowledge, and disgusting forwardness, has made himself despicable in the opinion of those who know him, and his fame is such that no person will venture into a company where R. is present. T.

ORIGINAL.

A TALE WITHOUT A NAME.

(concluded from page 176.)

MEANWHILE the BENTON family became distressed at his silence; the gentle CONSTANTIA'S mind was divided between sorrow and anger for this apparent neglect; as a sister, she

had a right to every information respecting his fate; as a mistress, she had, if possible, an additional claim; what then must have been her surprise at receiving no communications: Mr. BENTON's enquiries of his friend in *Philadelphia* on this subject, were answered by a relation of those circumstances, with which the reader is already acquainted, and in addition thereto, that of the fate of HENRY nothing was certainly known, but that a short time after the occurence at Mr. ****'s, a body had been found in the river Schuylkill, which was clothed in the same dress HENRY had worn at the time just mentioned, that the features were indistinguishable amidst the progress of putrefaction; yet there was every reason to believe he had fallen a victim to the unhappy state of his mind. This mournful intelligence plunged them into the deepest distress, and destroyed all those bright hopes, and plans of coming happiness, which they had so long and so fondly cherished: The health of CONSTANTIA visibly declined, she sunk like the early flower that unfolds its bloom to the bright beams of a mild winter's day, and sinks beneath the cold blasts of evening; all those delightful anticipations which had once cheered the prospects of futurity, were dissipated, and nothing but a cheerless blank presented itself to her sight, and contrasted itself with her former felicity. Mr. BENTON lamented that ardent love of independence, or pride, as in the bitterness of his heart he termed it, which had induced his adopted son, to seek that happiness at a distance, which he might have enjoyed amidst the scenes of his youth and in the society of his friends, in this all these misfortunes had originated; he saw himself, in prospect, deprived of the sole prop of his declining years, for in CONSTANTIA was now placed his only remaining comfort, and the same untimely end, though different in circumstance, which had deprived him of the one, threatened the existence of the other; all lamentation however was useless, and it was necessary, if possible, to snatch from the grasp of death his sole remaining hope. The city afforded the best medical advice, and thither he hastened with CONSTANTIA, where the most famous professors of the healing art were summoned to her assistance; yet her recovery seemed doubtful; when, to crown his misfortunes, he was one night roused from uneasy slumbers by a cry of fire, which originated in the house in which he lodged; with difficulty he made his escape into the street, and beheld the building enveloped in flames; for a moment he congratulated himself on his good

fortune, but immediately after remembered with a pang of agony, his unhappy daughter, he would have rushed through the flames to her assistance; had not the spectators, despairing of his success, prevented him from rashly risking his own life; the poor distressed old man ran up and down in the bitrest distress, entreating every person to save his daughter, but long in vain; one at last presented himself, he was in the habit of a dunkard; a bushy beard covered his chin, he lodged in an adjoining building, had risen on the first alarm, and been busy in affording every assistance in his power, "Poor old man," said he, "I will save your daughter's life, or lose my own!" The spectators represented the danger, but him no dangers could terrify, no arguments convince; he viewed the devouring element with a steady eye, while he hastily threw over his form a wetted great coat, then rushed through the flames and was lost to the view so long, that every one imagined he had perished; when at length he rushed into the street, bearing the wasted form of CONSTANTIA in his arms, wraped in the great coat, himself enveloped in flame, followed by another male figure who had been more fortunate; he delivered the precious burden to the arms of Mr. BENTON, and sunk at his feet overcome with fatigue, suffocated with smoke, and severely burned: The fire which clung to his dress was soon extinguished by the torrents of water which were thrown on him from the engines which had by this time arrived, and he conveyed to a neighbouring house, where he was soon restored to his senses; he found himself pressed to the heart of an elderly lady, who, by a mark on his breast recognized in him her long lost son, and in her he beheld the mother of MARIA. All this was a mystery to him, which he was now too ill to penetrate—this our business.

We left HENRY in the country, in a state which did not seem likely to permit his presenting himself again to the eye of the reader. By the care of a benevolent man who found him, he was once more restored to health and to composure; but we must mention a circumstance illustrative of some occurrences prior to this time: We have mentioned his flight from the city in the night, when he gave so terrible a proof how little the epithet "coward," applied to him, the severity of his self-accusations, and his painful journey along the banks of the river, this was continued as we have observed, until weariness compelled him to rest; the spot he chose for this purpose was beneath the shelter of a rock which hung over a small stream

which emptied its waters into the river; here he sat completely concealed from the view of any person who might pass by; the stream ran along the bottom of a deep gully, the sides of which were thickly overgrown with trees and shrubbery; here his painful meditations were interrupted by the accidental view of a body of a man floating towards the recess which concealed him; a sudden thought flashed upon his mind—might not (he asked himself) this circumstance be turned to his advantage? the size of this unhappy being was about his own, their age apparently the same, their dress indeed was different, but by exchanging them, it might, when found, be mistaken for his remains; thus he would be enabled to escape the horrors of a public punishment, and what he still more desired, his name, and even his remembrance would soon sink into oblivion; he might live in security, and make, by a virtuous life, some atonement to society for the involuntary breach of its most sacred laws; with infinite labour, difficulty and almost intolerable disgust, this wild and loathsome work was executed, and the expected consequences resulted from it; he then, after some repose, pursued his journey for several successive nights through the most secluded paths, until exhausted by fatigue and scanty food, he laid himself down in despair to die.

He remained for a long time after his recovery, with his kind host, whom he assisted in the labours of husbandry; and as it favoured his plan of concealment, he adopted his dress and habits; at length he became desirous of discovering what had actually been the fate of CALVERT, which some reports had rendered doubtful, he travelled to the city to obtain information; he found him living, all his apprehensions vanished and he looked forward to happier days; it was he whose intrepidity saved CONSTANTIA from the most terrible and painful death; attracted by the agonizing lamentations of Mr. BENTON, he approached, saw and knew his adopted father; after reaching the second floor of the house, he searched for the chamber of CONSTANTIA, and found, to his surprise, CALVERT in a sound asleep which intoxication had rendered almost stupifying; now thought he, might I be amply and safely revenged for all the wretchedness thou hast caused me, I have but to let thee remain and the flames will be my avenger—but a nobler revenge is mine—"Awake awake—arise, fly and save your life," he cried, exerting his powerful voice, "'tis HENRY who calls thee, him whom you have branded with the name of coward, him whom you have so basely injured! behold I

am revenged!" So saying, he left him, and hurried to find her without whom life would lose half its value; all this occurred in a moment; CALVERT opened his eyes and beheld the departing form of HENRY, and terrified, thought he called from the caverns of death! he saw the flames playing around the windows! arose and searched in vain for some means of escape; he had just reached the staircase when HENRY rushed by, bearing the form of CONSTANTIA, he followed him, and they rushed into the street together.

Mrs. HAMPTON, the mother of MARIA, was the widow of an officer who had served with reputation in the revolutionary war; he was in that part of the army the scene of whose operations was on the frontiers; this amiable lady determined to share the fortunes of her husband and accompanied him to the army; he was unfortunately killed in an engagement with the enemy. Their son, HENRY, was left in the care of his mother, and during the confusion which attended the retreat of the routed army, was lost, as she then thought, forever; returning to her native city, she was by hard pressure of necessity, compelled to keep a boarding house, to furnish the means of subsistance for herself and the then infant MARIA; it was this house in which the fire originated, and by this mean she again discovered her long lost son.

The story now approaches its conclusion—HENRY's recovery was hastened by the happy prospects which again opened to his view; he found in MARIA a sister, and the now recovered CONSTANTIA soon became his wife; in Mr. BENTON a father by mutual consent and by mutual affection.——The manuscript informs us of nothing further, except this sage observation—Had HENRY possessed more forbearance, and continued to follow the same plan he marked out for himself, when he refused the challenge of CALVERT, it would have been much better—and the story much shorter.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EYE.

SIR,

LATELY reading in an European publication, an account of the extraordinary attachment of a badger to its killed mate, and of its being by ignorant and inhuman creatures burned to death for a witch; I send you for publication, if you see fit, in you '*Eye*,' an account of an equally strong attachment in a mouse, but a direct contrast on the score of sense and humanity in two *American* lads.

BEING some time since with several others at a friend's house in the country, two lads came in to show us a wonder-

ful curiosity and sight, as they termed it; they had been moving a pile of rails, and among them found a nest of mice, the dam, with four young ones, nearly so well grown as to run; the dam appeared agitated with fear, yet would not forsake her brood, but hovered over them, as endeavouring to hide them under her, which she was unable to do from their size, telling the lads, or as they (and we) understood her, "If my little children and I am to die, you must kill me first." This at once excited their admiration and compassion.

In their hands she appeared sensible of their carresses, and showed a painful anxiety when withheld from her young ones. We tried many ways to tempt her to desert them, and to provoke her resentment, but to no purpose. On pricking her toes and runing her ears through with a pin, she boré it with a perfect resignation; we did the like to one of her young, which made it utter its sense of pain; the dam looked up at us, and seemed to question why we did so? one suggested, that as she did not resent an injury, nor attempt to run away, it was because she could see no chance of escaping. We then placed her at a hole running under the floor of an old out-house, where her own escape was certain, and took away her nest, that she might think her young and it lost to her; but she ran back to us and seemed as if she knew that we were playing tricks with her, and also seemed to beg of each of us for her children again. We then placed her young and the nest by the hole, when she hovered over them again as before; we put a cat and a little dog near her, who wished to prey on them, which only caused her to hug them the closer. One moved to kill her young, as he said, to see how she would behave on that; but her young masters would not permit it, "She, the *dear good little creature* and all her children shall live, and have their liberty," said they, and took her to the field again, putting them all in a place of safety, with a large crust of bread and some water for several days' supply. J. W.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EYE.

MR. OPTIC,

The following tale is so interesting, that notwithstanding its former publication, it may be new to many and gratifying to all your readers.

T.

PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE.

THE Leyden gazette of the 12th December, 1785, gives the following account of the interpositton of Divine Providence

in favour of a widow and her family, near Dordrecht in the province of Holland. This industrious woman was left by her husband, who was an eminent house carpenter, a comfortable house, with some land, and two boats for carrying merchandise and passengers on the canals. She was also supposed to be worth above ten thousand guilders, in ready money, which she employed in a hempen and sail cloth manufactory, as the means not only of increasing her fortune, but of instructing her children (a son and two daughters) in those useful branches of business. One night about nine o'clock, when the workmen had gone home, a person dressed in an uniform, with a musket and broad sword, came to her house, and requested lodging: "I let no lodging, friend," said the widow; "and besides, I have no spare bed, unless you sleep with my son, which I think very improper, being a perfect stranger to us all." The soldier then shewed a discharge from Diesbach's regiment (signed by the mayor, who gave him an excellent character) and a passport from Compte de Maillebois, governour of Buda. The widow believing the stranger an honest man as he really was, called her son, and asked him if he would accomodate a veteran who had served the republic for thirty years with reputation, with a part of his bed. The young man consented, and the soldier was hospitably entertained, and withdrew to rest. Some hours after, a loud thumping was heard at the street door, which roused the soldier, who stole softly down stairs, and listened at the hall. The blows were repeated, and the door almost broken through by a sledge or some heavy instrument. By this time the affrighted widow, and her daughter were running about, and screaming murder! murder! but the son having joined the soldier, with a case of loaded pistols, and the latter screwing on his bayonet, and fresh priming his piece, which was well filled with slugs, desired the women to retire, as bloody work might be expected in a few minutes. Soon after the door was burst open, and two fellows entered and were instantly shot by the son who discharged both his pitols at once. Two more returned the favour from without, but without effect; and the intrepid veteran, taking immediate advantage of the discharge of their arms, rushing on them like a lion, ran one through the body with his bayonet, and whilst the other was running away, lodged the contents of his piece between his shoulders, and he dropped dead on the spot. They then closed the door as well as they could; reloaded their arms; made

a good fire; and watched till day light, when a number of weavers and spinners came to resume their employment; we may guess their horror and astonishment on seeing four men dead on a dunghill, where the soldier had dragged them before the door was shut. The burgomaster and his syndic attended and took the depositions of the family relative to this affair. The bodies were buried in a cross road and a stone erected over the grave with this inscription "Here lie the wretched carcases of four unknown ruffians, who deservedly lost their lives in an attempt to rob a worthy woman and her family. A stranger who slept in the house, to which Divine Providence undoubtedly directed him, was the principal instrument in preventing the perperation of such horrid designs which justly entitles him to a lasting memorial and the thanks of the public. John Adrian De Vries, a discharged soldier from Diesbach's regiment, a native of Middleburgh in Zealand, and upwards of seventy years old, was the David who killed two of these Goliah's, the rest being slain by the son of the family. *In honorem, et gratitudinem ergo, Dei optimi maximi pietatis et innocentiæ summi protectoris, magistratus et concilium civitatis Dortrechiensis hoc signum pie curavere*, 20 *die Nov. annoque salutis humanæ*, 1785." The widow presented the soldier with one hundred guineas, and the city settled a handsome pension on him for the rest of his life.

ORIGIN OF THE FABLE CONCERNING CHARON.

IN no country was there ever such powerful motives devised to oblige people to preserve an untainted character as in Egypt; it is well known to the learned, how much the honours of sepulture were valued among the ancients, and the horrid ideas they annexed to the situation of that soul whose body lay unburied. The Egyptian legislature, availing itself of this universal prejudice, ordained, that no person should obtain a burial until a rigorous examination had passed into his conduct when living; for this purpose the corpse was ordered to be carried into an island in the lake Mocris, where the people sat as judges upon it, and decreed or denied it burial according as the character came out good or bad. The boatman who was first employed in carrying dead bodies over to this solemn trial being named CHARON, has given origin to the poetical fable of CHARON ferrying souls over the Styx, or from this world to the next.